Claims:

What is claimed is:

1. A method of marking a text document [100] through the insertion of inter-word blank characters, said method comprising the steps of:

editing [110] the number of said inter-word blank characters of said text document in order to conform to a model thus, obtaining a canonical text document [120];

retaining, from said canonical text document, to further conform to said model, a subset of positions [230] of said inter-word blank characters, said subset of positions in which insertion of blank characters is permitted;

computing, using said canonical text document [120] and a secret-key as inputs [130], a unique combination of positions among said subset of positions;

inserting into each position [151] of said unique combination of positions at least one extra blank character thus, obtaining a marked text document [150].

2. The method according to claim 1 wherein said text document [100] is actually a said marked text document [150] to be authenticated by a recipient sharing said secret-key [130], said method further comprising the step of:

comparing [160] said text document [100] to said marked text document [150];

if matching exactly [161]:

accepting said received text document as authentic;

if not [162]:

rejecting said received text document as fake.

3. The method according to claim 1 wherein said model calls for stripping all inter-word blank characters [110], in excess of one, off said text document, said model further retaining all said positions of said inter-word blank characters in said subset of positions.

4. The method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said model calls for the insertion, into a soft-copy text document, of three blank characters [240] at each end-of-line.

5. The method according to any one of the preceding claims wherein said model calls for excluding end-of-line blank characters [240] from said subset of positions.

6. The method according to any one of the previous claims wherein the number of inserted blanks to mark a said text document is set to reach a probability equal to or less than a predefined value of obtaining an identical said marked text document purely by chance.

7. The method according to claim 1 wherein the step of computing a unique combination of positions further includes the steps of:

calculating a digest [342] uniquely representing said secret-key [330] combined with said canonical text [320];

deriving from said digest a plurality of randomly distributed numbers [346] fitting in said subset of positions.

8. The method according to claim 7 wherein the step of calculating a digest is replaced by the step of:

applying a hashing function [420] over said secret-key [415] concatenated with said canonical text [410] thus, obtaining a fixed-size keyed digest [430].

9. The method according to claim 7 wherein the step of deriving a plurality of randomly distributed numbers further includes the steps of:

indexing said subset of positions [530];

using said digest as a seed [510] of a PRN (pseudo-random-number) generator;

operating said PRN generator; said step of operating said PRN generator further including the steps of:

retaining those of said numbers that fit said indexing [540];

excluding duplicated said numbers [545];

keep operating said PRN generator till enough valid numbers are withdrawn [525] to match the number of blanks to be inserted.

10.An authentication system, in particular a system for authenticating text document, comprising means adapted for carrying out the method according to any one of the previous claims.

11.A computer-like readable medium comprising instructions for carrying out the method according to any one of the claims 1 to 9.